



PRESS RELEASE

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Social Partners ask Commission to amend seafarers' "Bill of Rights"

The European Social Partners in the maritime transport sector - European shipowners (ECSA)ⁱ and European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)ⁱⁱ are requesting the European Commission to amend the Social Partners' Agreement Directive on seafarers' right to decent conditions of work. The Directive adopted in 2009 reflected the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), an international agreement setting minimum requirements for nearly every aspect of working and living conditions for seafarers. The Social Partners now expect the Commission to revise Directive 2009/13/EC in accordance with the MLC as amended in 2014.

"The ILO adopted a set of amendments to the international rules in 2014 introducing provisions to further ensure the welfare of seafarers and their families if seafarers are abandoned by the shipowner", commented Tim Springett, from the UK Chamber of Shipping and ECSA's spokesperson for Social Dialogue. "To be coherent, we want to make sure that they are now also included in the EU law, our Social Partners' Agreement", he concluded.

The MLC 2006 sets minimum requirements to improve seafarers' working and living conditions including recruitment and placement practices, conditions of employment, hours of work and rest, repatriation, annual leave, payment of wages, accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering, health protection, occupational safety and health, medical care, onshore welfare services and social protection.

"The new amendments make financial security compulsory for shipowners to cover the costs of maintaining and repatriating abandoned seafarers. It also expands the existing provisions on shipowners liability for sickness injury or death in service to ensure that contractual compensation is paid in full and without delay to the seafarer or their representative. This offers very important protection for seafarers", commented Mark Dickinson, Nautilus International Secretary General and ETF Spokesperson in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Maritime Transport.

The future EU Directive does not detract from the obligations of ILO Member States stemming from ratification and acceptance of the amended Maritime Labour Convention and its subsequent. Therefore the European Social Partners urge the Member States of the EU to implement the 2014 amendments to the MLC as soon as possible, and, in any case, by no later than their entry into force on the 18th January 2017.

The Social Partners trust that the European Institutions will now facilitate the legislative procedure in a timely fashion. This will allow for a common implementation of all its provisions at community level and increase compliance of its requirements.

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ⁱ *The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) was founded in 1965. It represents the national shipowners' associations of the EU and Norway. ECSA promotes the interests of European shipping so that the industry can best serve European and international trade in a competitive and free business environment, to the benefit of both shippers and consumers. The European shipowners control 40% of the global commercial fleet.*

ⁱⁱ *ETF is a pan-European trade union organisation which embraces more than 3.5 million transport workers from 230 transport unions and 41 European countries. It works within an overall framework of global solidarity to represent and defend the interests of transport workers throughout Europe.*